MAKING DEMANDS ON GOD

*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.511-12*

The power of the priesthood is limitless, but God has wisely placed upon each of us certain limitations. I may develop priesthood power as I perfect my life. I am grateful that even through the priesthood I cannot heal all the sick. I might heal people who should die. I might relieve people of suffering who should suffer. I fear I would frustrate the purposes of God.

Had I limitless power, and yet limited vision and understanding, I might have saved Abinadi from the flames of fire when he was burned at the stake, and in doing so I might have irreparably damaged him and limited him to a lower kingdom. He died a martyr and went to a martyr's reward—exaltation. He would have lived on the earth and could have lost his faith, his courage, even his virtue, and his exaltation.

I would likely have protected Paul against his woes if my power were boundless. I would surely have healed his "thorn in the flesh." And in doing so I might have foiled the program and relegated him to lower glories. Thrice he offered prayers, asking the Lord to remove the "thorn" from him, but the Lord did not so answer his prayers. Paul many times could have lost himself if he had been eloquent, well, handsome, and free from the things which made him humble.

I fear that had I been in Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844, I might have deflected the bullets which pierced the bodies of the Prophet and the Patriarch. I might have saved them from the sufferings and agony, but lost to them the martyr's death and reward. I am glad I did not have to make that decision.

With such uncontrolled power, I surely would have felt to protect Christ from the insults, the thorny crown, the indignities in the court, physical injuries. Perhaps I would have struck down his persecutors with shafts of lightning. When he hung on the cross I would have rescued him and would have administered to his wounds and healed them, giving him cooling water instead of vinegar. I might have saved him from death and lost to the world an atoning sacrifice and frustrated the whole program.

Would you dare to take the responsibility of bringing back to life your own loved ones? I, myself, would hesitate to do so. I am grateful that we may always pray: “Thy will be done in all things, for thou knowest what is best.” (55-15)

We must not make demands on God. I had another experience when I first came to Salt Lake some thirty-four years ago. A young woman came to me who had been told by her physician that she could not have children. She was newly married, but she had a situation which made that impossible, he said. She said she wanted to be healed. The whole family and I joined with them in fasting. We fasted for a day and then came together and I administered to her and asked the Lord, myself being the mouth, if it was his will that he heal her. Well, time went on and on and on and she came into my office one day and she said, “Brother Kimball, I am only going to give the Lord this many more weeks to heal me.” In other words, a demand. He has got to do it. He has got to do it. And I said, “My dear sister, what are you thinking of, making a demand of the Lord, telling him what to do, when he knows best, for he can see all the situations ahead and behind and now. That is a terrible thing. You had better go home and repent of your sins. That is a sin, to demand of the Lord something which you do not know anything about.” (76-53)